

# RICHARD CROKER GIVES TO THE JOURNAL HIS VIEWS ON THE CAMPAIGN.

Van Wyck, He Declares, Will Be Elected Mayor by a Plurality of 75,000.

Advises Henry George, if He Is Really in Earnest, to Make the Attempt at Once to Have Him Jailed.

Tammany's Former Chief Will Settle His Place of Residence and His Position in Politics to Suit His Own Wishes.



He Replies, Through Alfred Henry Lewis, to Attacks Made Upon Himself.

Denies That He Even Knows Wales by Sight and Adds, "I Have Met Many Better Men Than the Prince."

Moreover, He Would Not Feel Flattered if He Enjoyed the Reported Acquaintanceship with Britain's Heir Apparent.

"The Prince of Wales cannot claim, in any fashion, an acquaintance with me, nor I with him. I don't think he regrets this; I know I don't."

"I never met the Prince of Wales nor he me. We never shook hands. I don't even know him by sight."

"I never heard of his trying to hunt me up, and, as I certainly never tried to get in his way or meet him, I take it we are both contented."

"The Prince of Wales is a very commonplace man. He goes about a great deal and meets many people, but he never met me, and I should not have felt heavily flattered if he had."

"I've met many better men than the Prince of Wales and he meets worse men than I every day."

"My physician said I'd better go to England; that I'd not regain my health here. I went and I am better for it."

"But I am not the man I was. I can't stand the strain of a campaign like I used to. As it is I do all I can."

"On that point I have no apologies to make. I'm not bound to leave politics or live abroad just to match the uproarious demands of a lot of falsifiers and liars."

"I'll settle where I'll live and the part I'll take in politics to suit myself, and the only man I'll consult on either point will be my doctor."

"I have no plans to go back to England. So far as my present intentions are concerned, I'm going to stay right here."

By Alfred Henry Lewis.

"THE Prince of Wales and I never exchanged a word in my life. I never met him nor he me. We never shook hands. I wouldn't be able to point him out to you if he were in the room right now, as I don't even know him by sight."

The Speaker was Mr. Richard Croker. The scene was the Murray Hill. I had asked him concerning his alleged warm and friendly acquaintance with the Prince of Wales.

"No," continued Mr. Croker, with a smile quietly sarcastic, "I was amused when I saw the story in print how the Prince of Wales gushingly seized me by the hand when my horse won a race. It was pure invention; not a word of fact in it. And the other story of how I gave him a light for his cigar or he gave me a light for my cigar, I forget which. No truth in it."

Can Claim No Acquaintance.

"The Prince of Wales cannot claim in any fashion an acquaintance with me, nor I with him. I don't think he regrets this; I know I don't. I never heard of his trying to hunt me up, and as I certainly never tried to get in his way or meet him, I take it we are both contented with our relations as they are and neither of us suffers disappointment."

Here Mr. Croker laughed in the grim, quiet way peculiarly his own, as if the whole business took shape as a joke in his mind. It was clear that Mr. Croker was not acquainted with the Prince of Wales, had never met him and was in no sort depressed thereat.

"Such a story might easily arise," went on Mr. Croker, "and might find many ready believers. The Prince of Wales is a very commonplace man, and for that matter, so I hear, a very good kind of man. He goes about a great deal and meets many people. I do not understand that he hangs back at all from meeting anybody."

"I've Met Better Men."

"But he never met me, as I say, and I should not have felt heavily flattered if he had. I've met many better men than the Prince of Wales, and he meets worse men than I every day. And with that we'll let the story drop. I never regarded the yarn as of much public importance, any way."

Mr. Croker lighted a 30-cent cigar, proffered me one and gazed placidly around.

"What can you say of Henry George," I asked, "and his declarations that he'll have you in jail if he's elected Mayor?"

"There's nothing harsh I want to say about Henry George," replied Mr. Croker. "I've heard him described as an honest man; I've no doubt but he is. Moreover, I never speak harshly of any man, especially in politics."

No Names to Call George.

"I've no names to call Henry George; never in my life have I abused any man. I've said some things that were sharp and galling of men; things they didn't like and often resented bitterly. But I always said them to the man's face; I said them to him. No man ever heard me abuse another behind his back or when he wasn't there to speak and act for his defence."

"It's bad practice," quoth Mr. Croker in a calmly meditative way, as one who ransacked in vain years of experience to find a contradiction; "it's exceeding bad practice to abuse and vilify your opponents in politics. No one as a rule believes what you say; it excites sympathy; it does the man you abuse good—makes him viler."

"What made Henry George indulge in these wild-eyed threats of jailing you?" I asked.

"The strain of the campaign is making him a bit hysterical," retorted Mr. Croker with composure. "Mr. George is not a strong man physically. Again, he's totally unused to this business of campaigning. The work has been too much for his nerves. And, as often happens with men who have had his total lack of experience, he's got it fixed in his head that he's going to be Mayor. He isn't, but he believes he is, and it, as they say, 'rattles' him. That is why he talks so recklessly."

"What Nonsense George Talks."

"Why," continued Mr. Croker, rousing up, "see what nonsense George talks! A man of his natural good sense wouldn't do it if he were in his right mind. He says, for instance, that he'll jail me if he's Mayor. Mark you, this is to be done if he's elected. Now, if he's honest or got his wits and really meant what he said and there was aught of truth in what he utters, he'd arrest me now. Henry George the citizen is as competent to have me jailed if I've done wrong as Henry George the Mayor will ever be. The Mayor is not an absolute monarch; he can do no more in the direction of having a man arrested than the least of our citizens. Anybody can invoke the law; anybody can demand and get justice in this city."

"I Came Honestly by Every Dollar."

As a matter of trust and fact there's neither truth, manhood nor common sense in what

"Van Wyck will win; there's no sort of doubt of it. I've seen many an election and I'm not a rainbow chaser."

"I never saw a campaign where I was surer of success and had the proof before me. Van Wyck will get not less than 75,000 plurality."

"George will be the tail-ender. Low and Tracy will be in between. I do not care to say which I think will lead the other of these two."

"The next Mayor, the first Mayor of Greater New York, will be Van Wyck by a landslide."

"There's nothing harsh I want to say about Henry George. I've heard him described as an honest man; I've no doubt but he is."

"The strain of the campaign is making him a bit hysterical. He's totally unused to this business of campaigning."

"The work has been too much for his nerves, and he's got it fixed in his head that he's going to be Mayor. That is why he talks so recklessly."

"As a matter of truth and fact there's neither truth, manhood nor common sense in what George threatens or says concerning me. Every dollar I've got I came honestly by. There's not so much of it, but it all belongs to me."

"So far as any money from the city is concerned, the books will show it all. Why doesn't Henry George go to those books? He doesn't have to be elected Mayor for that."

"I've no palace or palaces; I've no hounds. I've got four horses in England. They're not overly good ones at that."

"Now if he's honest and really meant what he said, Henry George, the citizen, is as competent to have me jailed, if I've done wrong, as Henry George the Mayor will ever be."

"He says I ran away from the Fassett committee. I never ran away from anybody or anything in my life. Besides that, I was before the Fassett committee and answered all the questions they saw fit to ask."

George threatens or says concerning me. Every dollar I've got I came honestly by. There's not so much of it, but it all belongs to me. So far as any money I got from the city is concerned, the books will show it all. Why doesn't Henry George go to these books? There public records. He's at liberty, with every other citizen, to open, examine and take copies of them. He doesn't have to be elected Mayor for that. He can have every scrap of evidence before the Grand Jury as mere Henry George that he could take there if he were 'Mayor' Henry George. He knows that, if he hasn't parted entirely with his intelligence. Why doesn't he do it if he means business and not bluff.

"But the truth is, George's talk is balderdash, mere noise. He doesn't mean it. Nor does he seem to care for the truth. He says I ran away from the Fassett Committee. I never ran away from anybody or anything in my life. There's no need of my running. Besides that, I was before the Fassett committee and answered all the questions they saw fit to ask."

No Palaces and No Hounds.

"The whole talk on George's part is as reckless and baseless as where he talks of my 'palaces, my horses and my hounds. I've no palace nor palaces. I've got hounds. I've got four horses in England; they're not overly good ones at that."

"What did you go to England for the last time?" I asked during a pause devoted by Mr. Croker to relighting his cigar.

"Health and business," replied Mr. Croker, sententiously. "My health is none too good now; it was worse then. It's my stomach; I've got to be careful about my eating, and I've got to look out about these things, too." Here Mr. Croker held up his cigar. "No," he went on, "my physician said I'd better go to England; that I'd not regain my health here. I went, and, as I say, I am better for it."

"But I'm not the man I was; I'm not strong. I can't stand the strain and work of a campaign like I used to. That's why I pulled out of active politics; the sole reason. I'd be in the fight doing my utmost, just as I used to, if I could stand it. As it is I do all I can."

He Has No Apologies to Make.

"And on that point I've no apologies to make. I'm not bound to leave politics or live abroad just to watch the uproarious demands of a lot of falsifiers and liars. I'll settle where I'll live and the part I'll take in politics to suit myself, and the only man I'll consult on either point will be my doctor."

"Speaking of England," I said, "have you any plans to return thither?"

"None at all. I've no plans to go back to England. So far as my present intentions are concerned, I'm going to stay right here."

"There's a story," I said, "that there's latent trouble between you and Mr. Sheehan. The gossip and the wide belief, as well, is that the moment the election is over there will be civil war in Tammany Hall; that you will try to overthrow Sheehan and will put forward District-Leader Carroll for Sheehan's place."

"That's like George's talk about jailing me," replied Mr. Croker, with a smile about his grizzled face. "No sense or truth in it. There will not be civil war or war of any kind in Tammany Hall. I've no fight or feud with Mr. Sheehan, latent or otherwise. We're good, warm friends; we'll continue to be. I've never heard or thought of Mr. Carroll for Sheehan's place, and so far as I know—and I think I would know—there's no plan, no dream even on the part of anybody to send Mr. Carroll forward to relieve Mr. Sheehan. I hope I cover every possible question or contingency in this business. I want to."

Van Wyck Will Be Victor.

"How about the election?" I asked; "how will it go?"

Croker. "There's no sort of doubt of it. I've seen many an election and I'm not a rainbow chaser. But I never saw a campaign where I was surer of success and had the proof before me. Van Wyck will be elected. By the way, that was a good interview he had in the Journal this morning. I was glad to see it. That talk will do him good."

"How do you figure majorities?" I asked.

"Van Wyck will get not less than 75,000 plurality," Mr. Croker answered. "Of course, this is not a crazy guess; we have reliable reports to judge this from. Van Wyck will have at least 75,000 plurality. George will be the tail-ender. Low and Tracy will be in between. I do not care to say which I think will lead the other of those two. That's all there is to it. The City of Greater New York can gather itself together for a Democratic sweep. The next Mayor; the first Mayor of Greater New York, will be Van Wyck by a landslide."